

From: David Ahl
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 5:30pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I believe that the proposed Microsoft settlement is severely flawed, for the following two reasons:

1. Although it makes an effort to allow software developers more access to Windows APIs than they have had in the past, Microsoft has and will continue to control the computer industry through the use of its own technologies and file formats, unless specific provisions are made to stop it. Microsoft Office, for instance, uses "closed" (unpublished) file formats for word processing, spreadsheets, etc., forcing users to purchase their products or else struggle with complicated and imperfect file translation programs. Or Microsoft's Passport user id system, which has the effect of forcing internet users into using windows to access certain webpages or net services. For the sake of users and competing technology companies alike, all of Microsoft's file formats and all other restrictive technologies must be "open": fully published and documented.

2. Although the court found Microsoft essentially crippled Sun Microsystem's Java by using writing its own software and, as of Windows XP, failing to even include Java support in their operating system, no provisions were made to include a standardized version of java (or a version of java at all!) in the settlement.

Sincerely,
David Ahl